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FBI agent destroyed Oswald note

WASHINGTON (AP) — An FBI agent who investigated the assassination of President John F. Kennedy testified Friday that he personally flushed down the drain a note that Lee Harvey Oswald had delivered to the Dallas FBI office.

James P. Hosty Jr., who is now in the Kansas City FBI office, said he was ordered to destroy the Oswald note by J. Gordon Shanklin, at that time chief of the FBI operations in Dallas.

Hosty testified before a House Judiciary subcommittee which is probing charges that the FBI withheld evidence from the Warren Commission, which investigated the Nov. 22, 1963 Kennedy assassination.

Hosty said the note was delivered by Oswald to the Dallas FBI receptionist while he was out to lunch. He said he was not sure of the exact date but puts it between Nov. 6 and 8 because he had talked to Oswald's Russian-born wife, Marina, and a friend of Mrs. Oswald's around that time.

Hosty said the Oswald note said, "If I did not stop talking to his wife, he would take action against the FBI."

"It was an innocuous type of complaint, and I get many of them," he stated. So he said he just put the Oswald note into his own workbox.

Hosty said he had previously gone to the home of Ruth Payne on Nov. 1, 1963, trying to locate Oswald because of his contacts with the Communist party. He said Mrs. Oswald came out of an adjoining room and he interviewed her with Mrs. Payne acting as interpreter because Mrs. Oswald did not speak English well.

On Nov. 5, he said, he and another agent stopped by Mrs. Payne's house again and asked if she had any further information about Oswald.

On the day of the Kennedy assassination, Hosty said, he was dispatched to the Dallas police station to assist in interviewing Oswald. At that time, he said, he went through Oswald's personal effects and saw that his own name, address and car license number were in Oswald's telephone book.

Oswald said to Hosty, "You're the one who's been interviewing my wife," Hosty related, and said it took quite some time to quiet Oswald down after that.

Later, he said, Shanklin called him into his office at the FBI headquarters and Shanklin "was quite agitated and upset about the note." Hosty said Shanklin ordered him to write a memorandum detailing receipt of the note, its contents and the interviews with Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Oswald.

On Nov. 24, about two to four hours after Oswald was pronounced dead, Hosty said he was again called into Shanklin's personal office.

Hosty said he was then ordered to destroy the note and that he tore up the note and memo. He said he put the memo in the wastepaper basket, but Shanklin did not want the remnants of the note around.

Hosty then related: "I took it into the washroom, and I flushed it down the drain."

In testimony Thursday, Shanklin, now retired, denied ever knowing about the Oswald note and said he never ordered anybody to destroy it.